


NEXT UP

Unidentified male suspect, vehicle sought in connection with armed robbery in Hopewel...

An man wanted in connection with an armed robbery on Friday in Hopewell was capt



Pathologist says Ricky Gray's autopsy suggests problems with Virginia's execution procedure

By FRANK GREEN Richmond Times-Dispatch Jul 7, 2017



Ricky Javon Gray

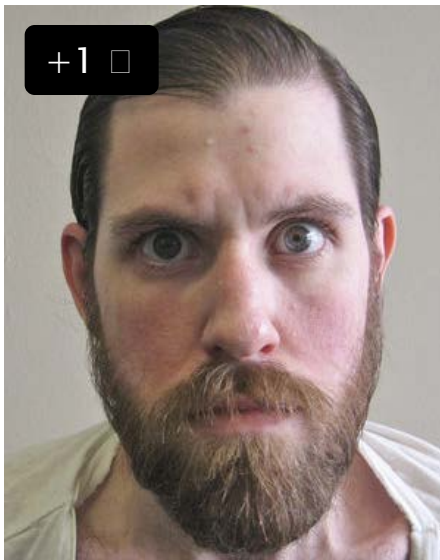
was sentenced to death for the 2006 killings of two young Richmond sisters. The girls were among seven people Gray killed.

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Lawyers for William C. Morva unsuccessfully sought to delay his execution Thursday night following the reported concerns from an expert about Ricky Gray’s execution by injection in January.

An article published in The Guardian on Wednesday cited a review of Gray’s autopsy report by Dr. Mark Edgar, associate director of bone and soft tissue pathology at the Emory University School of Medicine in Atlanta. Edgar concluded that something appears to have gone wrong under Virginia’s three-drug method.

Edgar said a frothy liquid found in Gray’s upper airways indicated that he suffered an acute pulmonary edema and



Morva



113 people executed in
Virginia since 1982

Feb 21, 2017 □ (0)

Virginia has executed 113 people
since the U.S. Supreme Court
allowed capital punishment to
resume in 1976; the second most
in the country beh...

MORE INFORMATION



William Morva executed by
injection for murders in
Southwest Virginia

JARRATT — William C. Morva was

that blood found on his lips indicated that blood entered Gray's lungs while he was still breathing. The Guardian reported that Edgar could not be certain about the cause of the edema, but said it would be similar to drowning.

Reached Friday, Edgar told the Richmond Times-Dispatch, "I cannot know how the executioners intended or expected the drugs to work. If they expected them to cause rapid and uncomplicated death ... without the possibility of a lingering sense of panic and terror, then they did not get what they expected.

"The anatomic changes described in Ricky Gray's lungs are more often seen in the aftermath of a sarin gas attack than in a routine hospital autopsy. This is of concern especially given the fact that midazolam is not an anesthetic, but a sedative often used for medical procedures requiring conscious sedation and the issue that the compounded drugs used in this case may have lacked potency or been impure," he said.

Gray's family obtained the official post-execution autopsy, The Guardian reported. Virginia's medical examiner's office conducts autopsies of executed inmates.

"This way of dying is intolerable. You can't control your breathing — it is terrible," said Edgar, according to The Guardian. "When it is this severe, you can experience panic and terror and, if the individual was in any way aware of what was happening to them, it would be unbearable."

Because of the unavailability of manufactured drugs for executions, Virginia uses compounded midazolam and compounded potassium chloride — made by an undisclosed Virginia pharmacy or pharmacies — as the first and third

executed by injection Thursday night for the capital murders of an unarmed security guard and a deputy sheriff ...

U.N. experts urge McAuliffe to grant clemency for killer set to die by injection Thursday

Two United Nations human rights experts are appealing to Gov. Terry McAuliffe to halt Thursday's scheduled execution by injection of William C...

Two previous Virginia death row sentences commuted because of mental illness; Morva scheduled to die Thursday

In recent decades, Virginia governors have granted clemency to two mentally ill inmates facing execution. One of them smeared feces over his C...



McAuliffe commutes Ivan Teleguz's death sentence to life without parole

Ivan Teleguz's death sentence for the murder-for-hire of his ex-girlfriend in 2001 was commuted to life in prison without the possibility of p...

drugs in executions. According to lawyers for Gray and Morva, Virginia is the only state to use a combination of two compounded chemicals in lethal injections.

State law bars the disclosure of the pharmacies making the drugs.

The first drug is intended to render the inmate unconscious, the second to stop breathing and the third to stop the heart.

Rob Lee, one of Morva's lawyers, said McAuliffe was asked for a temporary reprieve at 5 p.m. Thursday, less than three hours after the governor turned down Morva's bid for clemency.

"The reprieve was requested after new information came to light raising concerns that Virginia's lethal injection protocol did not act as intended, and therefore had resulted in a lingering and tortuous death," Lee said in a prepared statement.

He added, "We believed a reprieve was appropriate to allow time for further investigation to ensure that the Commonwealth carries out future executions — including Mr. Morva's — in a manner that avoids unnecessary pain and suffering."

A McAuliffe spokesman confirmed Friday that the governor denied the request for a temporary reprieve.



After delay in Ricky Gray execution, Department of Corrections changes execution protocol

Execution witnesses in Virginia now will see less of the proceedings, no longer viewing inmates as they are led into the execution chamber and...

“Earlier in the day, he had stated his intention to allow the execution to proceed without his intervention. That statement was based on his review of the case as well as his confidence in the protocol the Department of Corrections used to carry out this sentence,” said Brian Coy, the spokesman.



Ricky Gray's legal team raises 'grave concern' with execution procedure that took more than 30 minutes

A delay in the execution of Ricky Javon Gray on Wednesday night was due to difficulty in placing the IV line in a vein, officials with the Vir...

The Department of Corrections and other state officials have said they are confident in the purity and efficacy of the periodically tested chemicals used in executions.

Morva's 9 p.m. execution at the Greenville Correctional Center in Jarratt on Thursday, according to the Department of Corrections, was carried out without complications, and he was pronounced dead at 9:15 p.m.

After the midazolam was administered Thursday, Morva made a loud noise that sounded similar to a hiccup, and there were several sharp contractions of his abdomen.



Executed: Ricky Gray put to death for murders of Harvey girls

JARRATT — Ricky Javon Gray was executed by injection Wednesday night for the slaying of two young Richmond sisters on New Year's Day 2006.

The department said Gray's execution in January was complicated by difficulties in placing IV lines. The procedure, which usually takes a few minutes, took more than half an hour.

Morva was executed for killing two people during an escape in Montgomery County in 2006. Gray, who murdered seven people in seven days in Richmond in 2006, was executed for the capital murders of two young sisters.